



October 2005

AWIN Monthly Newsletter

Welcome...

...to the the monthly newsletter for the Arkansas Wireless Information Network, also known as AWIN. AWIN is a multi-phased approach to building the infrastructure for a statewide interoperable radio system. It will be used by first responders of all types across the state. As we move toward this new level of communication, we will continue to keep you informed of the progress.

AWIN Support

In partnership with the Arkansas State Police, the Department of Information Systems (DIS) operates the AWIN Call Center to support all AWIN subscribers (radio users) with technical assistance or AWIN-related requests. Technicians are on call in the event of any emergency. Call (501) 682-HELP (682-4357) or toll-free (800) 435-7989 or e-mail: awin.support@arkansas.gov

The DIS professionals who provide support for AWIN have fielded 182 customer requests to date.

AWIN users pleased

After about seven months of using AWIN, agencies in the northwest corner of the state seem to be happy with the new system. Sergeant David Hyden with Arkansas State Police, Troop L says that communication is much better for the troop since the cutover to AWIN in March. "It's making communication with the agency (troop-wide) a lot easier."

Hyden says that some were concerned before the implementation of the digital system in Area L, but now there are many positive remarks about AWIN. "Everyone is amazed about how clear the system is." Hyden says the troopers have much clearer radio signals now than they did with the analog system. The troopers don't have to deal with the popping and cracking that came with using the old radios. The troop still has to deal with fringe areas, but Hyden says those are fewer.

Sergeant Hyden pointed out that the training on the new digital

equipment went well for Arkansas State Police employees. Since AWIN is based on the State Police system, users within Troop L were already familiar with the system. Hyden says that they have had to contact the AWIN support desk on occasion, and believes that their response was very efficient.

Troopers from Troops H, J and L were recently involved in the hurricane relief efforts in Fort Smith. They sent about 15 troopers at a time to assist at evacuee camps, working 12 hour shifts at a time. Hyden was pleased that supervisors in Springdale were able to keep in touch with troopers working in Sebastian County, with the help of AWIN.

Hyden believes that longer the agencies work with the system the easier usage will be, and any problems that have come up since March will all be worked out. "It

works... The system is working well above my expectations."



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CSEPP plan progressing

Communications for the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program will continue on the analog system, even though Areas E and F are set to be cut-over by the end of the month. After the cutover in those areas, state police dispatchers will be the only ones using AWIN to dispatch.

CSEPP has submitted a communications plan to the Arkansas Department of Emergency management. When the plan receives approval, the program can move forward with the equipment purchase. Then the digital system and training can be implemented.

Site cutovers begin

Areas E and F are well on their way to entering the world of digital technology. Both areas are set to be cutover to the AWIN system by the end of the month. Site cutovers began in Area E October 18th, and technicians will begin working in Area F on October 19th. Both areas are slated to be completely cutover by the 28th.

During a cutover, the area involved could be without radio communications for up to eight hours. Tower

site upgrades typically begin around 9:00 a.m., and are completed by the end of the day.

Law enforcement agencies that are impacted must rely on alternative sources of communication and surrounding agencies for help while this process is completed.



Send us your story

Do you have a story you would like to share with other end users? Any advice you want to pass along to agencies that are awaiting a cutover in their area? We want to know how AWIN is working for you! Please send your comments to awin@arkansas.gov.



---Coming Events & Reminders-----Coming Events & Reminders---



- Don't forget the Mobile Data Solutions Conference October 19th. This is the first in a series of conferences that will be offered. If you are missing out on this kick-off event, please watch your mailboxes for announcement for upcoming conferences.
- The Monticello Command and Control User Group Meeting is scheduled for October 27th at 10:00 am at the Monticello Fire Department Training Room.

For more information on the Command and Control Project, please visit www.awin.arkansas.gov. For further details about the command and control end user meetings, please contact Penny Rubow at 501.682.5358 or penny.rubow@arkansas.gov.



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